



Paydirt April, 2022

Page: 63
Section: General News
Region: National, AU
Circulation: 4423
Type: Magazines Trade
Size: 613.00 sq.cms.



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Polymetals breaks ground at Mansala

Since listing in June, Polymetals Resources Ltd has spent the bulk of its time drilling at the Alahiné gold project in Guinea's Siguiri Basin – until now.

The company broke first ground at the Mansala gold project, also in the Siguiri Basin, in February with an 805-hole, 5,000m auger drill programme.

Six targets have been identified from multi-element soil geochemistry analysis with the exploration team searching for gold-in-soil anomalies and other pathfinder elements such as silver.

The drill holes are being plotted over a 100m by 50m pattern across the six delineated zones. Results from the campaign will form the basis of a follow-up aircore and RC drilling programme.

Polymetals chief executive Alex Hanly explained the company's approach by referencing industry peers exploring for African gold such as Golden Rim Resources Ltd, Predictive Discovery Ltd, Marvel Gold Ltd and Tietto Minerals Ltd.

"All of these guys are doing auger works," Hanly told **Paydirt**. "The auger drilling has been tried and tested by some of our peers... it is a cost-effective and rapid method."

"In the Siguiri Basin, there's a lot of transported cover that blankets the whole area. Drilling 5,000m does sound like a big target but really...we're drilling about 5m per hole of that transported cover to get a sample within the saprolite zone."

Although this is the first time Polymetals has drilled at Mansala, reconnaissance soil geochemistry at the project in 2020 gave encouraging indications.

A survey of roughly 10% of the licence revealed gold samples in excess of 40 ppb as well as 11 samples that returned assays in excess of 1,000 ppb (1 g/t gold). Other results included 93.98 g/t, 6.03 g/t, 5.85 g/t, 2.91 g/t, 2.38 g/t and 1.1 g/t.

When the current auger drilling is complete, Polymetals will begin airborne drone geophysical studies over Mansala and Alahiné with the help of a South African services company.

Results from the airborne studies are expected to be published in early April.

"The guys are making final preparations at the moment to get on site," Hanly said. "Using a drone is much quicker and more economic for us. Alahiné will be going first and then we'll have Mansala down the track."

"That's really to compliment all the work we're doing across both licenses at the moment. For Alahiné, that will give us a greater understanding of the geology at depth without the ability to historically map vast areas because of the transported cover."

"The airborne magnetics will give us a sort



Polymetals donated two water bores to villages in Guinea last year

of x-ray vision underneath that transported cover and an understanding of what lies beneath. It's going to be very informative and it will help us better target our mega north-northeast trend at Alahiné."

Auger drilling at Alahiné in February confirmed a mineralised gold trend after 604 holes were completed for 7,372m.

Grades included 3.58 g/t gold and 0.93 g/t, encouraging the possibility for bedrock gold.

As works progress, Polymetals made a strong addition to its team with lead exploration geologist Nana Asante.

Asante has worked in West Africa for more than 13 years including positions with Golden Star Resources and Avocet Mining plc where he helped develop a maiden ore reserve of 480,000oz gold in the Siguiri Basin.

Hanly considers the addition of Asante along with his site visit to the project late last year as an "excellent" indicator of Polymetals' growing stature in the region.

"It was really good to cement who we are and our company goals, where we want to be in the next 12 months, to the site team," he said. "We gained a bit of a head start on the learning curve there with getting Asante on board."

The Siguiri Basin has historically seen a large presence of artisanal mining, giving Polymetals the opportunity to export Australian standards of high-quality and safe exploration while also learning something from the locals.

"[The locals] have been mining this land and various regions not for decades but centuries," Hanly said. "You can see in our peers as well that they've targeted the areas where artisanal miners have been...it's great for us

to home in on the mineralisation and focus our drilling.

"We're obviously employing workers and upskilling them where we can. We have a few geological technicians now that we've trained up and are an important part of our team at the moment. It's definitely a win-win and these guys know that we're there to help."

On last year's site visit, Hanly and country manager Aguiboh Bah helped open two water bores in the local villages. Hanly explained the company had an obligation to not just empower local workforces, but to also invigorate infrastructure and the economy.

"One thing I have really focused on with Bah was making sure we went around to the all the villages, meeting them, telling the what we're doing and our commitment to the region," he said. "We installed two water bores that we commissioned when we were on site and got the community around it, including the local mayor."

"[It's] giving back to the community in not only the workforce but also the economics of the region. There's plenty of work there yet to come. It was certainly eye opening for me that even the small changes and improvements Polymetals could make would create a huge difference."

"We'll continue working on that over the next 12 months and get that feedback and cohesion with the community and understand where they want us to focus our efforts on."

Hanly plans to be back on site in May.

– Fraser Palamara